

**Illinois Early Learning Council
Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee
Monday, October 15th
9:00 am – 10:00 am
Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60603**

Meeting Notes

Meeting Participants

In-Person: Kim Collins, Angela Farwig, Jon Furr, Nicole Gillis, Dan Harris, Theresa Hawley, Elliot Regenstein, Christy Serrano, Bob Spatz, Teri Talan

Phone: Lori Baas, Carie Bires, Bernard Cesarone, Bob Goerge, TeeNeka Jones, Brenda Klosterman, Lauri Morrison-Frichtl, Susan Munro, Deb Scheiter, Tom Spyрка, Natalie Tucker, Joellyn Whitehead, Blake Whitson, Cindy Zumwalt

1. Welcome and Introductions

The application for the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTTT-ELC) grant is due at the end of next week (October 26th). The Early Learning Council Executive Committee had an opportunity to review a list of potential priorities and weigh in. The list of priorities that was distributed was strong on data infrastructure. This meeting was convened to have a similar discussion. The information shared with the DRE Committee is not official so the discussion about these priorities will be at a somewhat conceptual level. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss the process and provide input on the specific priorities related to data.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the 8/31 meeting were formally approved.

3. Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge

a. General Phase 2 Update

Overall, the Early Learning Council Executive Committee set some of the high priorities for the grant. The Governor's office is working within those parameters to expand on and price out those priorities. As a part of this process, the different committees within the Council are being engaged to refine those pieces (as is the DRE Committee at this meeting).

b. Recommended Data Priorities

The draft E2 section of the Phase 2 application for the RTTT-ELC was shared with the Committee. The priorities may change based on feedback from different agencies or based on information from costing out the different options, but are at least a starting point for the discussion. The draft E2 section for Phase 2 is similar to that of Phase 1, which was focused on integrating

systems across ISBE, DHS, and DCFS and focused on ways to make data more accessible to user communities.

ACTIVITY (E)(2) -1.2: Designate and Enhance Primary Systems for Data on Children & Families, Workforce, and Program.

There are three categories of data elements that were considered essential (at least from the Phase 1 application standpoint). This included data elements on 1) children & families, 2) workforce, and 3) program.

1) Children & Families

Probably the most complex area, but also where we may benefit most from the work with JSI. The discussion at the Executive Committee level highlighted the need to focus on the ability to integrate data particularly across ISBE and DHS systems. The overall strategy here is to make sure there are some resources to be able to move ahead with the integration strategies. At ISBE, there is the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) project which is trying to establish a centralized demographic database that includes a number of core personal identifiers, a common set of rules for conducting matches using the core set of personal identifiers and secured agency identification numbers, and procedures for rating confidence in those matches. As part of that process, DHS has been a part of some of the discussions, but there has been concern about their having capacity to participate fully in that project. When talking with DHS representatives last week, they had referenced the work that is being done with the Integrated Eligibility System (IES) project. This is an internal DHS project looking to build out a common identifier across all of their legacy systems and to facilitate record matching across those systems. To create a bridge between DHS and ISBE, there is some work that needs to happen to take the IES project within DHS and begin to focus on establishing matching processes to the centralized database that is being created on the ISBE/WDQI side. This will happen through:

- a. Indexing the identifier elements needed to support these matches;
- b. Applying the WDQI matching rules, as appropriate, to DHS data;
- c. Designing the web service extractions from DHS systems needed to support the matches; and
- d. As resources permit, piloting and implementing matching of DHS and ISBE data.

With this, it will help to build out the resources and capacity to particularly support DHS as a part of this work knowing that much of their internal agency capacity over the next couple of years is going to be focused on trying to interact with data systems for the Affordable Care Act and the health system side. This will hopefully provide some capacity and support for cutting across and linking with ISBE.

This is an area of the application where there should be flexibility to leave room for potential changes based on the outcome of the JSI report. Language still needs to be built into the section to say that this is where we are going, but we reserve the right to shift directions with this funding based on JSI recommendations. Once the JSI report is

completed, there will be some process to figure out how to spend the funding allocated for this data work based on the different options outlined in the report.

Although the amount of money from the grant will not allow us to do all that is needed, there is still value in doing some of the pieces we can afford. There seems to be a clear need for increased capacity and support focused on the linkage of data between ISBE and DHS. Rough calculations suggest that the dollar amount currently allotted for this scope might get us to a point where we can design out the matching processes and begin to build out some of the website service extraction processes. However, the budget for this scope will not be enough to automate all of that and to do the matching and form clean up that will be associated with merging the data sets. This is clearly a major priority for the DRE Committee and the system as a whole. There will need to be continued discussions and a further review about what is not going to be covered. Overall, the idea is that some work will begin with this grant and that the additional projects will have to be supported by future grants.

Feedback/Questions:

Is the data from Home Visiting program part of the Legacy systems? And is it going to be linked with ISBE data?

- There wasn't a consensus about whether or not Home Visiting program data will be included, but the way it was described by the DHS CIO was that it is going to cut across all their systems.
- MIECHV is most likely going to be a part of the DHS Integrated Eligibility system (IES), but that information needs to be confirmed (Dan Harris).
- After hearing concerns about whether or not Early Intervention and Home Visiting data are going to be included in the system, one of the next steps will be to share this information with DHS to confirm which data sets are specifically going to be included in IES (Jon Furr).

An issue in early childhood (more than K-12 or K-20) is being able to link child data to family data. Child identifiers can be generated, but the issue is linking the child data to his or her family's data. This is critical to look at family level behavior, which is important for DHS on the child care side.

- Seems like it is an internal DHS issue, but will find out to what extent that is currently being tackled as a part of the IES project (Jon Furr).

2) Workforce:

This section was outlined in the Phase 1 application and is still being identified as a priority by DHS and INCCRRA. The priority involves trying to integrate as much of the workforce data as possible so the Gateways to Opportunity Registry can serve as a comprehensive data repository. There has been some work that has been done through rule. DCFS has begun to require Registry enrollment for instructors within licensed programs. ISBE has also enacted a rule that requires their non-certified staff to enroll in the Registry. As such, part of the goal

to make the Registry as comprehensive as possible is being addressed through these administrative rule changes. One gap that still exists is for certified instructors in ISBE funded programs. Many of those are exempt from licensing (not covered by the DCFS rule) and ISBE has a separate certification database, which collects information for those educators. Therefore, the goal is to begin to automate data transfer for the educators that are within the ISBE certification system to the Registry. This integration will avoid duplicative data entries on behalf of these teachers and facilitate their access to professional development resources, provide a means of verifying certification information, and establish the Registry as a repository of unified educator data for research and analysis. ISBE is currently in the process of changing their certification age ranges and redesigning their certification database, which could potentially complicate this process. It is the hope that this can be incorporated in the application and the appropriate budget will be given to address this type of integration.

Feedback/Questions:

What about staff in Home Visiting programs?

- Part of the reason this is a priority is to support the QRIS and the need to verify staff qualifications. Home Visiting programs are not part of the QRIS. They are welcome to be a part of the Registry, but are not mandated - not that this couldn't be a possibility in the future. (This is also another area that is being left open for potential future changes.) As it is now, there is a good amount of money that needs to go toward supporting elements of this system (i.e. transcript review) that go beyond just the entry of certification information.

3) Program

The Data Tracking Program (DTP) collects data on providers that is being used to for QRIS related support. Within the ISBE system, there is the E-Grants system that is collecting data on the programs for Preschool for All related funding. Given the goal to have an aligned QRIS system, the priority is to provide several projects. For one, capturing the DCFS licensing data that is done on a periodic basis and making it occur on a daily basis so that programs upon licensure will automatically have a DTP profile and will be enrolled in the QRIS system. A similar project with ISBE – data will begin to be captured on a daily basis and integrating it with the DTP so that there is the ability to provide updated tracking across all various programs and link ISBE programs with related QRIS supports. The focus of this work is to do as much as possible within our federated structure to make sure these systems are “talking” to each other with the purpose of working toward a consolidated system that houses program data and provides programs with one place to go to for supports within the QRIS framework.

ACTIVITY (E)(2)-1.4: Integrate Head Start and Early Head Start data into the Primary Systems through the establishment of the Illinois Head Start Data Cooperative

The proposal from Phase 1 was essentially to get staffing support for the Head Start community to begin to align their data with the data that is maintained by ISBE in particular, but also the DHS data as well. The focus of this priority is to provide staffing support to Head Start programs in order to create a common data file in the appropriate format that supports integration data sharing activities. Head Start data is already integrated into the system around workforce and program, it is really more about integrating data on children and families. Not a big funding ask, but is work that does require some support to do and it is important that there is agreement by the Head Start community to focus on this as a priority.

ACTIVITY (E)(2)-2.2: Extend the Illinois Shared Learning Environment to ELD Programs

A webinar was held on October 9th to discuss the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE) and the value it could offer. There have been discussions with an early childhood curriculum and assessment provider to see, from their perspective, if this platform would be beneficial. The company looked at the Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC) website, which is the technology that is powering ISLE and examined the plans for ISLE. Their reaction was positive. From their perspective, they spend a lot of time and effort getting the data that they need to make the products operate. So, it would be helpful to have the option to tie into a platform that has already brought together the necessary data on children. In addition, the company was excited about being able to connect data that is associated with their applications with a platform for K-12 educators as children transition (as the data usually “dies” within the initial system).

There have also been conversations with an early learning coordinator that is a part of the ISLE pilot in the K-12 space. They are currently implementing the ITEACH tools and DIBELS system in their district. These applications are separate and both require manual data entry. The concept about having a single sign-on portal that begins to pull together all the web-based applications that the district is using would be of value for their teachers.

This priority would provide funding for a pilot to extend the ISLE, beginning within the preschool area. The pilot sites would be school-based Preschool for All classrooms in RTTT – Phase 3 districts. Those 35 districts throughout the state are already required to integrate their data systems with ISLE as part of their participation in the RTTT grant. It will be a lot less costly to begin here. There will be efforts to provide opportunities for these pilot communities to make joint decisions (i.e. collectively define what applications are to be used as part of this process). This essentially is not as high of a priority as the other work that was discussed, but is potentially a worthwhile use of funds.

Feedback/Questions:

This pilot is only addressing one sector (PFA) and does not take into account child care or Head Start programs. Could the pilot go beyond including just school-based programs?

For a limited scope of this work, it will be more cost effective for the pilot to be targeted on the places where data is already being integrated with this platform and whose technical expertise

is already focused on this system (required in RTTT – Phase 3 districts). The intention has always been to broaden it beyond school based programs, but the process is beginning with this pilot. Members of the committee felt strongly about having the pilot include providers outside of school-based settings. There will be follow up work in order to figure out the extent to which community-based/Head Start programs within these RTTT districts could be invited to participate in the pilot.

Other Research/Evaluation Related Priorities

Investments currently in the application supporting research/evaluation related priorities are:

- Validation of QRIS, which would include a child outcomes study;
- Developing a plan for a predictive validity study for KIDS; and
- Developing an inter-rater reliability system for KIDS.